

Letter to the Editors

What is today's score?

I read with great interest the recent paper by Chung et al. (*Ambulatory Surgery* 1993; 1: 189-94) which proposes a new scoring system for postanaesthetic discharge. Anaesthetists seem to love recovery scoring systems, why else would there be such a proliferation of Aldrete, Steward, Robertson and now PADSS? For all those (like myself) who hate such artificial concepts, may I suggest a new scoring system which indicates the state of wellbeing of the anaesthetist in the Day Surgery Centre, the General Rage and Tension Expression or GRATE Index. This index (Table 1) has been extensively investi-

gated in our own Centre and is found to be a very accurate predictor of the smooth running of any surgical list. There are rumours of a similar index used by those who operate in day units which is known as the Direct Expression of No Surgical Ease (DENSE) but this remains as pure conjecture at present.

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Table 1. General Rage and Tension Expression (GRATE) Index

1. Timing	2 = Surgeon changed, scrubbed and waiting in theatre. 1 = Surgeon sent message that he/she will be a bit late. 0 = No sign of surgeon.
2. The list	2 = Operating list order and names unchanged from printed list. 1 = One change in list order from printed list. 0 = Printed list bears no relation to patients awaiting operation.
3. The patients	2 = Patients have followed their written preoperative instructions. 1 = One patient has had their normal full breakfast. 0 = Everyone has been eating and/or drinking and no one has taken their routine medication.
4. The notes	2 = All the notes and investigations are ready. 1 = Two patients need their consent forms signed. 0 = The notes are lost.
5. The staff	2 = The unit's staff are on duty. 1 = There is a new agency staff nurse in recovery who has never been in a day unit or recovery before. 0 = There is a new agency ODA, theatre sister and recovery nurse today.
6. Assistance	2 = There is an experienced registrar helping you with the list. 1 = You are on your own. 0 = You have the new keen SHO with you today and it is his first day in anaesthesia.
7. Forms	2 = The department has run out of audit forms. 1 = The registrar has filled in the forms. 0 = There is a new audit form today.
8. Research	2 = No one is doing any research projects today. 1 = There is only one patient suitable for research today. 0 = The research registrar has consented six patients for the new trial on reinforced laryngeal mask airways.
9. Surgical equipment	2 = The surgeon is performing the usual slow operation. 1 = The surgeon wants to try his new laser on the second case. 0 = There is a whole list of laser assisted cases and no one is sure of the correct setting for the laser and someone has changed the microscope.
10. Discharge	2 = Everyone is dressed and ready to go home. 1 = The GP's wife is still being sick and is in severe pain. 0 = The child of your most lucrative private surgeon is still being sick and is in severe pain.

There is a maximum GRATE score of 20. This is a nebulous concept and cannot be achieved. There is a minimum score of 0. This is incompatible with normal life and is often seen.